

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-8 are pending herein. Claim 1 has been amended and new claim 8 has been added as supported by, for example, Fig. 1 of the present application.

Examiner Kackar is thanked for courtesies extended to Applicants' representative (Steven Caldwell) during telephonic interviews on April 2 and April 16, 2004. The substance of those interviews have been incorporated into the following remarks.

1. Claims 1 and 7 were rejected under §102(b) over Aruga et al. To the extent that this rejection might be applied against amended claim 1, it is respectfully traversed.

With reference to Fig. 1 of the present application, pending independent claim 1 recites, among other things, that a susceptor supporting construction includes a susceptor 2 and a supporting member 7 connected to one another. The supporting member includes a first wall portion defining a tubular main portion, a second wall portion defining a diameter extending portion arranged at an end portion thereof, and one or more continuous round portions arranged between the main portion and the diameter extending portion, when viewed by an outer profile of a longitudinal section of the supporting member. Pending claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the entirety of the second wall portion is joined to the susceptor. The applied prior art of record (discussed below) does not disclose or suggest a structure in which the entirety of the second wall portion is joined to the susceptor, as claimed.

With reference to Fig. 8 of Aruga, susceptor stem 120 is bonded to plate assembly 100. Aruga further discloses that alumina heater support tube 140 "slips over the outside of the bottom end of the stem 120" and "protects the stem somewhat from the effects of full exposure to the process environment in the processing chamber and helps to minimize heat losses from the top of the stem due to radiation heat transfer" (column 7, lines 60-63).

It is clear from the above description of the structure shown in Aruga's Fig. 8 that no portion of heater support tube 140 is bonded to or joined to plate assembly 100. As discussed above, and in contrast to Aruga's susceptor supporting structure, pending claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the entirety of the second wall portion (i.e, the diameter extending portion) is joined to the susceptor. The PTO's position during the April 16, 2004 telephonic interview was that the top portion of the combined structure of Aruga's heater support tube 140 and susceptor stem 120 corresponds to the claimed second wall portion. As can clearly be seen from Fig. 8 of Aruga, however, the entirety of the combined structure of heater support tube 140 and susceptor stem 120 is not joined to the plate assembly 100, as claimed. Again, no portion of heater support tube 140 is actually joined to susceptor plate assembly 100. As such, Aruga fails to disclose or suggest each and every element recited in pending claim 1.

In view of all of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of the §102(b) rejection over Aruga are respectfully requested.

New dependent claim 8 has been added to further distinguish the present application over Aruga. For example, new claim 8 recites that the supporting member is an integral body including the first wall portion, the second wall portion and the one or more continuous round portions. Based on the above discussion of Aruga, it is clear that heater support tube 140 does not include portions that correspond to each of the first wall portion, the second wall portion and the one or more continuous round portions, as claimed. Likewise, it is clear that susceptor stem 120 does not include portions corresponding to each of the first wall portion, the second wall portion and the one or more continuous round portions features, as claimed. Accordingly, new claim 8 provides further patentable distinctions over Aruga.

2. Claim 2 was rejected under §103(a) over Aruga et al. Applicants respectfully submit that the arguments submitted above distinguish claim 1 from Aruga. Since claim 2 depends directly from claim 1, claim 2 is also believed to be allowable over Aruga.

3. Claims 3-6 were rejected under §103(a) over Aruga et al. in view of the Chen et al. Applicants respectfully submit that the arguments submitted above distinguish claim 1 from Aruga. Since Chen does not overcome the deficiencies of Aruga, and since claims 3-6 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1, claims 3-6 are also believed to be allowable over the applied prior art of record.


If Examiner Kackar believes that further contact with Applicants' attorney would be advantageous toward the disposition of this case, he is herein requested to call Applicants' attorney at the phone number noted below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1446.

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Date

Respectfully submitted,



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